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POETRY, LANGUAGE, THOUGHT

WHAT IS CALLED THINKING?

The Question Concerning Technology

& and Other Essays &

MARTIN HEIDEGGER

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The Age of the World Picture

In metaphysics reflection is accomplished concerning the essence of what is and a decision takes place regarding the essence of truth.¹ Metaphysics grounds an age, in that through a specific interpretation of what is and through a specific comprehension of truth it gives to that age the basis upon which it is essentially formed.² This basis holds complete dominion over all the phenomena that distinguish the age. Conversely, in order that there may be an adequate reflection upon these phenomena themselves, the metaphysical basis for them must let itself be apprehended

1. "Reflection" translates *Besinnung*. On the meaning of the latter, see SR 155 n. 1. "Essence" will be the translation of the noun *Wesen* in most instances of its occurrence in this essay. Occasionally the translation "coming to presence" will be used. *Wesen* must always be understood to allude, for Heidegger, not to any mere "whatness," but to the manner in which anything, as what it is, takes its course and "holds sway" in its ongoing presence, i.e., the manner in which it endures in its presencing. See QT 30, 3 n. 1. "What is" renders the present participle *seiend* used as a noun, *das Seiende*. On the translation of the latter, see T 40 n. 6.

2. *der Grund seines Wesensgestalt*. Heidegger exemplifies the statement that he makes here in his discussion of the metaphysics of Descartes as providing the necessary interpretive ground for the manner in which, in the subjectness of man as self-conscious subject, Being and all that is and man—in their immediate and indissoluble relation—come to presence in the modern age. See Appendix 9, pp. 150 ff.

in them. Reflection is the courage to make the truth of our own presuppositions and the realm of our own goals into the things that most deserve to be called in question (see Appendix 1).³

One of the essential phenomena of the modern age is its science. A phenomenon of no less importance is machine technology. We must not, however, misinterpret that technology as the mere application of modern mathematical physical science to praxis. Machine technology is itself an autonomous transformation of praxis, a type of transformation wherein praxis first demands the employment of mathematical physical science. Machine technology remains up to now the most visible outgrowth of the essence of modern technology, which is identical with the essence of modern metaphysics.

A third equally essential phenomenon of the modern period lies in the event of art's moving into the purview of aesthetics. That means that the art work becomes the object of mere subjective experience, and that consequently art is considered to be an expression of human life.⁴

A fourth modern phenomenon manifests itself in the fact that human activity is conceived and consummated as culture. Thus culture is the realization of the highest values, through the nurture and cultivation of the highest goods of man. It lies in the essence of culture, as such nurturing, to nurture itself in its turn and thus to become the politics of culture.

A fifth phenomenon of the modern age is the loss of the gods.⁵ This expression does not mean the mere doing away with the gods, gross atheism. The loss of the gods is a twofold process. On the one hand, the world picture is Christianized inasmuch as the cause of the world is posited as infinite, unconditional,

3. Heidegger's explanatory appendixes begin on p. 137.

4. *Erlebnis*, translated here as "subjective experience" and later as "life-experience," is a term much used by life philosophers such as Dilthey and generally connotes adventure and event. It is employed somewhat pejoratively here. The term *Erfahrung*, which is regularly translated in this volume as "experience," connotes discovery and learning, and also suffering and undergoing. Here and subsequently (i.e., "mere religious experience"), "mere" is inserted to maintain the distinction between *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*.

5. *Entgötterung*, here inadequately rendered as "loss of the gods," actually means something more like "degodization."

absolute. On the other hand, Christendom transforms Christian doctrine into a world view (the Christian world view), and in that way makes itself modern and up to date. The loss of the gods is the situation of indecision regarding God and the gods. Christendom has the greatest share in bringing it about. But the loss of the gods is so far from excluding religiosity that rather only through that loss is the relation to the gods changed into mere "religious experience." When this occurs, then the gods have fled. The resultant void is compensated for by means of historiographical and psychological investigation of myth.

What understanding of what is, what interpretation of truth, lies at the foundation of these phenomena?

We shall limit the question to the phenomenon mentioned first, to science [*Wissenschaft*].

In what does the essence of modern science lie?

What understanding of what is and of truth provides the basis for that essence? If we succeed in reaching the metaphysical ground that provides the foundation for science as a modern phenomenon, then the entire essence of the modern age will have to let itself be apprehended from out of that ground.

When we use the word "science" today, it means something essentially different from the *doctrina* and *scientia* of the Middle Ages, and also from the Greek *epistēmē*. Greek science was never exact, precisely because, in keeping with its essence, it could not be exact and did not need to be exact. Hence it makes no sense whatever to suppose that modern science is more exact than that of antiquity. Neither can we say that the Galilean doctrine of freely falling bodies is true and that Aristotle's teaching, that light bodies strive upward, is false, for the Greek understanding of the essence of body and place and of the relation between the two rests upon a different interpretation of beings and hence conditions a correspondingly different kind of seeing and questioning of natural events. No one would presume to maintain that Shakespeare's poetry is more advanced than that of Aeschylus. It is still more impossible to say that the modern understanding of whatever is, is more correct than that of the Greeks. Therefore, if we want to grasp the essence of modern science, we must first free ourselves from the habit of

comparing the new science with the old solely in terms of degree, from the point of view of progress.

The essence of what we today call science is research. In what does the essence of research consist?

In the fact that knowing [*das Erkennen*] establishes itself as a procedure within some realm of what is, in nature or in history. Procedure does not mean here merely method or methodology. For every procedure already requires an open sphere in which it moves. And it is precisely the opening up of such a sphere that is the fundamental event in research. This is accomplished through the projection within some realm of what is—in nature, for example—of a fixed ground plan⁶ of natural events. The projection sketches out in advance the manner in which the knowing procedure must bind itself and adhere to the sphere opened up. This binding adherence is the rigor of research.⁷ Through the projecting of the ground plan and the prescribing of rigor, procedure makes secure for itself its sphere of objects within the realm of Being. A look at that earliest science, which is at the same time the normative one in the modern age, namely, mathematical physics, will make clear what we mean. Inasmuch as modern atomic physics still remains physics, what is essential—and only the essential is aimed at here—will hold for it also.

Modern physics is called mathematical because, in a remarkable way, it makes use of a quite specific mathematics. But it can proceed mathematically in this way only because, in a deeper sense, it is already itself mathematical. *Ta mathēmatika* means for the Greeks that which man knows in advance in his observation of whatever is and in his intercourse with things: the corporeality of bodies, the vegetable character of plants, the animality of animals, the humanness of man. Alongside these, belonging also to that which is already-known, i.e., to the mathematical, are numbers. If we come upon three apples on the table, we

6. *Grundriss*. The verb *reißen* means to tear, to rend, to sketch, to design, and the noun *Riss* means tear, gap, outline. Hence the noun *Grundriss*, first sketch, ground plan, design, connotes a fundamental sketching out that is an opening up as well.

7. "Binding adherence" here translates the noun *Bindung*. The noun could also be rendered "obligation." It could thus be said that rigor is the obligation to remain within the realm opened up.

recognize that there are three of them. But the number three, threeness, we already know. This means that number is something mathematical. Only because numbers represent, as it were, the most striking of always-already-knowns, and thus offer the most familiar instance of the mathematical, is "mathematical" promptly reserved as a name for the numerical. In no way, however, is the essence of the mathematical defined by numberness. Physics is, in general, the knowledge of nature, and, in particular, the knowledge of material corporeality in its motion, for that corporeality manifests itself immediately and universally in everything natural, even if in a variety of ways. If physics takes shape explicitly, then, as something mathematical, this means that, in an especially pronounced way, through it and for it something is stipulated in advance as what is already-known. That stipulating has to do with nothing less than the plan, or projection of that which must henceforth, for the knowing of nature that is sought after, be nature: the self-contained system of motion of units of mass related spatiotemporally. Into this ground plan of nature, as supplied in keeping with its prior stipulation, the following definitions among others have been incorporated: Motion means change of place. No motion or direction of motion is superior to any other. Every place is equal to every other. No point in time has preference over any other. Every force is defined according to—i.e., is only—its consequences in motion, and that means in magnitude of change of place in the unity of time. Every event must be seen so as to be fitted into this ground plan of nature. Only within the perspective of this ground plan does an event in nature become visible as such an event. This projected plan of nature finds its guarantee in the fact that physical research, in every one of its questioning steps, is bound in advance to adhere to it. This binding adherence, the rigor of research, has its own character at any given time in keeping with the projected plan. The rigor of mathematical physical science is exactitude. Here all events, if they are to enter at all into representation as events of nature, must be defined beforehand as spatiotemporal magnitudes of motion. Such defining is accomplished through measuring, with the help of number and calculation. But mathematical research

into nature is not exact because it calculates with precision; rather it must calculate in this way because its adherence to its object-sphere has the character of exactitude. The humanistic sciences, in contrast, indeed all the sciences concerned with life, must necessarily be inexact just in order to remain rigorous. A living thing can indeed also be grasped as a spatiotemporal magnitude of motion, but then it is no longer apprehended as living. The inexactitude of the historical humanistic sciences is not a deficiency, but is only the fulfillment of a demand essential to this type of research. It is true, also, that the projecting and securing of the object-sphere of the historical sciences is not only of another kind, but is much more difficult of execution than is the achieving of rigor in the exact sciences.

Science becomes research through the projected plan and through the securing of that plan in the rigor of procedure. Projection and rigor, however, first develop into what they are in methodology. The latter constitutes the second essential characteristic of research. If the sphere that is projected is to become objective, then it is a matter of bringing it to encounter us in the complete diversity of its levels and interweavings. Therefore procedure must be free to view the changeableness in whatever encounters it. Only within the horizon of the incessant otherness of change does the plenitude of particularity—of facts—show itself. But the facts must become objective [*gegenständlich*]. Hence procedure must represent [*vorstellen*] the changeable in its changing,⁸ must bring it to a stand and let the motion be a motion nevertheless. The fixedness of facts and the constancy of their change as such is "rule." The constancy of change in the necessity of its course is "law." It is only within the purview of rule and law that facts become clear as the facts that they are. Research into facts in the realm of nature is intrinsically the establishing and verifying of rule and law. Methodology, through which a sphere of objects comes into representation,

8. Throughout this essay the literal meaning of *vorstellen*, which is usually translated with "to represent," is constantly in the foreground, so that the verb suggests specifically a setting-in-place-before that is an objectifying, i.e., a bringing to a stand as object. See pp. 127, 129-30, 132; cf. Appendix 9, pp. 148 ff. Heidegger frequently hyphenates *vorstellen* in this essay and its appendixes so as to stress the meaning that he intends.

has the character of clarifying on the basis of what is clear—of explanation. Explanation is always twofold. It accounts for an unknown by means of a known, and at the same time it verifies that known by means of that unknown. Explanation takes place in investigation. In the physical sciences investigation takes place by means of experiment, always according to the kind of field of investigation and according to the type of explanation aimed at. But physical science does not first become research through experiment; rather, on the contrary, experiment first becomes possible where and only where the knowledge of nature has been transformed into research. Only because modern physics is a physics that is essentially mathematical can it be experimental. Because neither medieval *doctrina* nor Greek *epistēmē* is science in the sense of research, for these it is never a question of experiment. To be sure, it was Aristotle who first understood what *empeiria* (*experientia*) means: the observation of things themselves, their qualities and modifications under changing conditions, and consequently the knowledge of the way in which things as a rule behave. But an observation that aims at such knowledge, the *experimentum*, remains essentially different from the observation that belongs to science as research, from the research experiment; it remains essentially different even when ancient and medieval observation also works with number and measure, and even when that observation makes use of specific apparatus and instruments. For in all this, that which is decisive about the experiment is completely missing. Experiment begins with the laying down of a law as a basis. To set up an experiment means to represent or conceive [*vorstellen*] the conditions under which a specific series of motions can be made susceptible of being followed in its necessary progression, i.e., of being controlled in advance by calculation. But the establishing of a law is accomplished with reference to the ground plan of the object-sphere. That ground plan furnishes a criterion and constrains the anticipatory representing of the conditions. Such representing in and through which the experiment begins is no random imagining. That is why Newton said, *hypothesis non fingo*, "the bases that are laid down are not arbitrarily invented." They are developed out of the ground plan of nature and are sketched into it. Experiment is that methodology which, in its planning

and execution, is supported and guided on the basis of the fundamental law laid down, in order to adduce the facts that either verify and confirm the law or deny it confirmation. The more exactly the ground plan of nature is projected, the more exact becomes the possibility of experiment. Hence the much-cited medieval Schoolman Roger Bacon can never be the forerunner of the modern experimental research scientist; rather he remains merely a successor of Aristotle. For in the meantime, the real locus of truth has been transferred by Christendom to faith—to the infallibility of the written word and to the doctrine of the Church. The highest knowledge and teaching is theology as the interpretation of the divine word of revelation, which is set down in Scripture and proclaimed by the Church. Here, to know is not to search out; rather it is to understand rightly the authoritative Word and the authorities proclaiming it. Therefore, the discussion of the words and doctrinal opinions of the various authorities takes precedence in the acquiring of knowledge in the Middle Ages. The *componere scripta et sermones*, the *argumentum ex verbo*,⁹ is decisive and at the same time is the reason why the accepted Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy that had been taken over had to be transformed into scholastic dialectic. If, now, Roger Bacon demands the *experimentum*—and he does demand it—he does not mean the experiment of science as research; rather he wants the *argumentum ex re* instead of the *argumentum ex verbo*, the careful observing of things themselves, i.e., Aristotelian *empeiria*, instead of the discussion of doctrines.

The modern research experiment, however, is not only an observation more precise in degree and scope, but is a methodology essentially different in kind, related to the verification of law in the framework, and at the service, of an exact plan of nature. Source criticism in the historical humanistic sciences corresponds to experiment in physical research. Here the name "source criticism" designates the whole gamut of the discovery, examination, verification, evaluation, preservation, and interpretation of sources. Historiographical explanation, which is

9. "The comparing of the writings with the sayings, the argument from the word" *Argumentum ex re*, which follows shortly, means "argument from the thing."

based on source criticism, does not, it is true, trace facts back to laws and rules. But neither does it confine itself to the mere reporting of facts. In the historical sciences, just as in the natural sciences, the methodology aims at representing what is fixed and stable and at making history an object. History can become objective only when it is past. What is stable in what is past, that on the basis of which historiographical explanation reckons up the solitary and the diverse in history, is the always-has-been-once-already, the comparable. Through the constant comparing of everything with everything, what is intelligible is found by calculation and is certified and established as the ground plan of history. The sphere of historiographical research extends only so far as historiographical explanation reaches. The unique, the rare, the simple—in short, the great—in history is never self-evident and hence remains inexplicable. It is not that historical research denies what is great in history; rather it explains it as the exception. In this explaining, the great is measured against the ordinary and the average. And there is no other historiographical explanation so long as explaining means reduction to what is intelligible and so long as historiography remains research, i.e., an explaining. Because historiography as research projects and objectifies the past in the sense of an explicable and surveyable nexus of actions and consequences, it requires source criticism as its instrument of objectification. The standards of this criticism alter to the degree that historiography approaches journalism.

Every science is, as research, grounded upon the projection of a circumscribed object-sphere and is therefore necessarily a science of individualized character. Every individualized science must, moreover, in the development of its projected plan by means of its methodology, particularize itself into specific fields of investigation. This particularizing (specialization) is, however, by no means simply an irksome concomitant of the increasing unsurveyability of the results of research. It is not a necessary evil, but is rather an essential necessity of science as research. Specialization is not the consequence but the foundation of the progress of all research. Research does not, through its methodology, become dispersed into random investigations,

so as to lose itself in them; for modern science is determined by a third fundamental event: ongoing activity (Appendix 2).¹⁰

By this is to be understood first of all the phenomenon that a science today, whether physical or humanistic, attains to the respect due a science only when it has become capable of being institutionalized. However, research is not ongoing activity because its work is accomplished in institutions, but rather institutions are necessary because science, intrinsically as research, has the character of ongoing activity. The methodology through which individual object-spheres are conquered does not simply amass results. Rather, with the help of its results it adapts [*richtet sich . . . ein*] itself for a new procedure. Within the complex of machinery that is necessary to physics in order to carry out the smashing of the atom lies hidden the whole of physics up to now. Correspondingly, in historiographical research, funds of source materials become usable for explanation only if those sources are themselves guaranteed on the basis of historiographical explanation. In the course of these processes, the methodology of the science becomes circumscribed by means of its results. More and more the methodology adapts itself to the possibilities of procedure opened up through itself. This having-to-adapt-itself to its own results as the ways and means of an advancing methodology is the essence of research's character as ongoing activity. And it is that character that is the intrinsic basis for the necessity of the institutional nature of research.

In ongoing activity the plan of an object-sphere is, for the first time, built into whatever is. All adjustments that facilitate a plannable conjoining of types of methodology, that further the reciprocal checking and communication of results, and that regulate the exchange of talents are measures that are by no means only the external consequences of the fact that research work is expanding and proliferating. Rather, research work becomes the distant sign, still far from being understood, that modern science is beginning to enter upon the decisive phase of its his-

10. "Ongoing activity" is the rendering of *Betrieb*, which is difficult to translate adequately. It means the act of driving, on, or industry, activity, as well as undertaking, pursuit, business. It can also mean management, or workshop or factory.

tory. Only now is it beginning to take possession of its own complete essence.

What is taking place in this extending and consolidating of the institutional character of the sciences? Nothing less than the making secure of the precedence of methodology over whatever is (nature and history), which at any given time becomes objective in research. On the foundation of their character as ongoing activity, the sciences are creating for themselves the solidarity and unity appropriate to them. Therefore historiographical or archeological research that is carried forward in an institutionalized way is essentially closer to research in physics that is similarly organized than it is to a discipline belonging to its own faculty in the humanistic sciences that still remains mired in mere erudition. Hence the decisive development of the modern character of science as ongoing activity also forms men of a different stamp. The scholar disappears. He is succeeded by the research man who is engaged in research projects. These, rather than the cultivating of erudition, lend to his work its atmosphere of incisiveness. The research man no longer needs a library at home. Moreover, he is constantly on the move. He negotiates at meetings and collects information at congresses. He contracts for commissions with publishers. The latter now determine along with him which books must be written (Appendix 3).

The research worker necessarily presses forward of himself into the sphere characteristic of the technologist in the essential sense. Only in this way is he capable of acting effectively, and only thus, after the manner of his age, is he real. Alongside him, the increasingly thin and empty Romanticism of scholarship and the university will still be able to persist for some time in a few places. However, the effective unity characteristic of the university, and hence the latter's reality, does not lie in some intellectual power belonging to an original unification of the sciences and emanating from the university because nourished by it and preserved in it. The university is real as an orderly establishment that, in a form still unique because it is administratively self-contained, makes possible and visible the striving apart of the sciences into the particularization and peculiar unity that belong to ongoing activity. Because the forces intrinsic to the essence of modern science come immediately and unequiv-

ocally to effective working in ongoing activity, therefore, also, it is only the spontaneous ongoing activities of research that can sketch out and establish the internal unity with other like activities that is commensurate with themselves.

The real system of science consists in a solidarity of procedure and attitude with respect to the objectification of whatever is—a solidarity that is brought about appropriately at any given time on the basis of planning. The excellence demanded of this system is not some contrived and rigid unity of the relationships among object-spheres, having to do with content, but is rather the greatest possible free, though regulated, flexibility in the shifting about and introducing of research apropos of the leading tasks at any given time. The more exclusively science individualizes itself with a view to the total carrying on and mastering of its work process, and the more realistically these ongoing activities are shifted into separate research institutes and professional schools, the more irresistibly do the sciences achieve the consummation of their modern essence. But the more unconditionally science and the man of research take seriously the modern form of their essence, the more unequivocally and the more immediately will they be able to offer themselves for the common good, and the more unreservedly too will they have to return to the public anonymity of all work useful to society.

Modern science simultaneously establishes itself and differentiates itself in its projections of specific object-spheres. These projection-plans are developed by means of a corresponding methodology, which is made secure through rigor. Methodology adapts and establishes itself at any given time in ongoing activity. Projection and rigor, methodology and ongoing activity, mutually requiring one another, constitute the essence of modern science, transform science into research.

We are reflecting on the essence of modern science in order that we may apprehend in it its metaphysical ground. What understanding of what is and what concept of truth provide the basis for the fact that science is being transformed into research?

Knowing, as research, calls whatever is to account with regard to the way in which and the extent to which it lets itself be put at the disposal of representation. Research has disposal over

anything that is when it can either calculate it in its future course in advance or verify a calculation about it as past. Nature, in being calculated in advance, and history, in being historically graphically verified as past, become, as it were, "set in place" [*gestellt*].¹¹ Nature and history become the objects of a representing that explains. Such representing counts on nature and takes account of history. Only that which becomes object in this way is—is considered to be in being. We first arrive at science as research when the Being of whatever is, is sought in such objectiveness.

This objectifying of whatever is, is accomplished in a setting-before, a representing, that aims at bringing each particular being before it in such a way that man who calculates can be sure, and that means be certain, of that being. We first arrive at science as research when and only when truth has been transformed into the certainty of representation. What it is to be is for the first time defined as the objectiveness of representing, and truth is first defined as the certainty of representing, in the metaphysics of Descartes. The title of Descartes's principal work reads: *Meditationes de prima philosophia* [*Meditations on First Philosophy*]. *Prôté philosophia* is the designation coined by Aristotle for what is later called metaphysics. The whole of modern metaphysics taken together, Nietzsche included, maintains itself within the interpretation of what it is to be and of truth that was prepared by Descartes (Appendix 4).

Now if science as research is an essential phenomenon of the modern age, it must be that that which constitutes the metaphysical ground of research determines first and long beforehand the essence of that age generally. The essence of the modern age can be seen in the fact that man frees himself from the bonds of the Middle Ages in freeing himself to himself. But

11. The verb *stellen*, with the meanings to set in place, to set upon (i.e., to challenge forth), and to supply, is invariably fundamental in Heidegger's understanding of the modern age. See in this essay the discussion of the setting in place of the world as picture, p. 129. For the use of *stellen* to characterize the manner in which science deals with the real, see SR 167-168 for a discussion in which *stellen* and the related noun *Ge-stell* serve centrally to characterize and name the essence of technology in this age, see OT 14 ff.

this correct characterization remains, nevertheless, superficial. It leads to those errors that prevent us from comprehending the essential foundation of the modern age and, from there, judging the scope of the age's essence. Certainly the modern age has, as a consequence of the liberation of man, introduced subjectivism and individualism. But it remains just as certain that no age before this one has produced a comparable objectivism and that in no age before this has the non-individual, in the form of the collective, come to acceptance as having worth. Essential here is the necessary interplay between subjectivism and objectivism. It is precisely this reciprocal conditioning of one by the other that points back to events more profound.

What is decisive is not that man frees himself to himself from previous obligations, but that the very essence of man itself changes, in that man becomes subject. We must understand this word *subjectum*, however, as the translation of the Greek *hypokeimenon*. The word names that-which-lies-before, which, as ground, gathers everything onto itself. This metaphysical meaning of the concept of subject has first of all no special relationship to man and none at all to the I.

However, when man becomes the primary and only real *subjectum*, that means: Man becomes that being upon which all that is, is grounded as regards the manner of its Being and its truth. Man becomes the relational center of that which is as such. But this is possible only when the comprehension of what is as a whole changes. In what does this change manifest itself? What, in keeping with it, is the essence of the modern age?

When we reflect on the modern age, we are questioning concerning the modern world picture [*Weltbild*].¹² We characterize the latter by throwing it into relief over against the medieval and the ancient world pictures. But why do we ask concerning a world picture in our interpreting of a historical age? Does every period of history have its world picture, and indeed in such a way as to concern itself from time to time about that world

12. The conventional translation of *Weltbild* would be "conception of the world" or "philosophy of life." The more literal translation, "world picture," is needed for the following of Heidegger's discussion, but it is worth noting that "conception of the world" bears a close relation to Heidegger's theme of man's representing of the world as picture.

picture? Or is this, after all, only a modern kind of representing, this asking concerning a world picture?

What is a world picture? Obviously a picture of the world. But what does "world" mean here? What does "picture" mean? "World" serves here as a name for what is, in its entirety. The name is not limited to the cosmos, to nature. History also belongs to the world. Yet even nature and history, and both interpenetrating in their underlying and transcending of one another, do not exhaust the world. In this designation the ground of the world is meant also, no matter how its relation to the world is thought (Appendix 5).

With the word "picture" we think first of all of a copy of something. Accordingly, the world picture would be a painting, so to speak, of what is as a whole. But "world picture" means more than this. We mean by it the world itself, the world as such, what is, in its entirety, just as it is normative and binding for us. "Picture" here does not mean some imitation, but rather what sounds forth in the colloquial expression, "We get the picture" [literally, we are in the picture] concerning something. This means the matter stands before us exactly as it stands with it for us. "To get into the picture" [literally, to put oneself into the picture] with respect to something means to set whatever is, itself, in place before oneself just in the way that it stands with it, and to have it fixedly before oneself as set up in this way. But a decisive determinant in the essence of the picture is still missing. "We get the picture" concerning something does not mean only that what is, is set before us, is represented to us, in general, but that what is stands before us—in all that belongs to it and all that stands together in it—as a system. "To get the picture" throbs with being acquainted with something, with being equipped and prepared for it. Where the world becomes picture, what is, in its entirety, is juxtaposed as that for which man is prepared and which, correspondingly, he therefore intends to bring before himself and have before himself, and consequently intends in a decisive sense to set in place before himself (Appendix 6). Hence world picture, when understood essentially, does not mean a picture of the world but the world conceived and grasped as picture. What is, in its entirety, is now taken in such a way that it first is in being and only is in being

to the extent that it is set up by man, who represents and sets forth.¹³ Wherever we have the world picture, an essential decision takes place regarding what is, in its entirety. The Being of whatever is, is sought and found in the representedness of the latter.

However, everywhere that whatever is, is not interpreted in this way, the world also cannot enter into a picture; there can be no world picture. The fact that whatever is comes into being in and through representedness transforms the age in which this occurs into a new age in contrast with the preceding one. The expressions "world picture of the modern age" and "modern world picture" both mean the same thing and both assume something that never could have been before, namely, a medieval and an ancient world picture. The world picture does not change from an earlier medieval one into a modern one, but rather the fact that the world becomes picture at all is what distinguishes the essence of the modern age [*der Neuzeit*].¹⁴ For the Middle Ages, in contrast, that which is, is the *ens creatum*, that which is created by the personal Creator-God as the highest cause. Here, to be in being means to belong within a specific rank of the order of what has been created—a rank appointed from the beginning—and as thus caused, to correspond to the cause of creation (*analogia entis*) (Appendix 7). But never does the Being of that which is consist here in the fact that it is brought before man as the objective, in the fact that it is placed in the realm of man's knowing and of his having disposal, and that it is in being only in this way.

The modern interpretation of that which is, is even further from the interpretation characteristic of the Greeks. One of the oldest pronouncements of Greek thinking regarding the Being of that which is runs: *To gar auto noein estin te kai einai*.¹⁵ This sentence of Parmenides means: The apprehending of whatever is belongs to Being because it is demanded and determined by

13. *durch den vorstellenden-herstellenden Menschen gestellt ist.*

14. *Die Neuzeit* is more literally "the new age." Having repeatedly used this word in this discussion, Heidegger will soon elucidate the meaning of the "newness" of which it speaks (pp. 130 ff.).

15. The accepted English translation of this fragment is, "For thought and being are the same thing" (Nahm).

Being. That which is, is that which arises and opens itself, which, as what presences, comes upon man as the one who presences, i.e., comes upon the one who himself opens himself to what presences in that he apprehends it. That which is does not come into being at all through the fact that man first looks upon it, in the sense of a representing that has the character of subjective perception. Rather, man is the one who is looked upon by that which is; he is the one who is—in company with itself—gathered toward presencing, by that which opens itself. To be beheld by what is, to be included and maintained within its openness and in that way to be borne along by it, to be driven about by its oppositions and marked by its discord—that is the essence of man in the great age of the Greeks. Therefore, in order to fulfill his essence, Greek man must gather (*legen*) and save (*sözen*), catch up and preserve,¹⁶ what opens itself in its openness, and he must remain exposed (*aléthein*) to all its sundering confusions. Greek man is as the one who apprehends [*der Vernehmer*] that which is,¹⁷ and this is why in the age of the Greeks the world cannot become picture. Yet, on the other hand, that the beingness of whatever is, is defined for Plato as *eidos* [aspect, view] is the presupposition, destined far in advance and long ruling indirectly in concealment, for the world's having to become picture (Appendix 8).

In distinction from Greek apprehending, modern representing, whose meaning the word *repraesentatio* first brings to its earliest expression, intends something quite different. Here to represent [*vor-stellen*] means to bring what is present at hand [*das Vor-handene*] before oneself as something standing over against, to relate it to oneself, to the one representing it, and to force it back into this relationship to oneself as the normative realm. Wherever this happens, man "gets into the picture" in precedence over whatever is. But in that man puts himself into the picture in this way, he puts himself into the scene, i.e., into the open

16. "Preserve" translates *bewahren*. The verb speaks of a preserving that as such frees and allows to be manifest. On the connotations resident in *wahren* and related words formed from *wahr*, see T 42 n. 9.

17. The noun *Vernnehmer* is related to the verb *vernennen* (to hear, to perceive, to understand). *Vernennen* speaks of an immediate receiving, in contrast to the setting-before (*vor-stellen*) that arrests and objectifies.

sphere of that which is generally and publicly represented. Thewith man sets himself up as the setting in which whatever is must henceforth set itself forth, must present itself [*sich . . . präsenteren*], i.e., be picture. Man becomes the representative [*der Repräsentant*] of that which is, in the sense of that which has the character of object.

But the newness in this event by no means consists in the fact that now the position of man in the midst of what is, is an entirely different one in contrast to that of medieval and ancient man. What is decisive is that man himself expressly takes up this position as one constituted by himself, that he intentionally maintains it as that taken up by himself, and that he makes it secure as the solid footing for a possible development of humanity. Now for the first time is there any such thing as a "position" of man. Man makes depend upon himself the way in which he must take his stand in relation to whatever is as the objective. There begins that way of being human which mans the realm of human capability as a domain given over to measuring and executing, for the purpose of gaining mastery over that which is as a whole. The age that is determined from out of this event is, when viewed in retrospect, not only a new one in contrast with the one that is past, but it settles itself firmly in place expressly as the new. To be new is peculiar to the world that has become picture.

When, accordingly, the picture character of the world is made clear as the representedness of that which is, then in order fully to grasp the modern essence of representedness we must track out and expose the original naming power of the worn-out word and concept "to represent" [*vorstellen*]: to set out before oneself and to set forth in relation to oneself. Through this, whatever is comes to a stand as object and in that way alone receives the seal of Being. That the world becomes picture is one and the same event with the event of man's becoming *subiectum* in the midst of that which is (Appendix 9).

Only because and insofar as man actually and essentially has become subject is it necessary for him, as a consequence, to confront the explicit question: Is it as an "I" confined to its own preferences and freed into its own arbitrary choosing or as the "we" of society; is it as an individual or as a community; is it

as a personality within the community or as a mere group member in the corporate body, is it as a state and nation and as a people or as the common humanity of modern man, that man will and ought to be the subject that in his modern essence he *already is*? Only where man is essentially already subject does there exist the possibility of his slipping into the aberration of subjectivism in the sense of individualism. But also, only where man *remains* subject does the positive struggle against individualism and for the community as the sphere of those goals that govern all achievement and usefulness have any meaning.

The interweaving of these two events, which for the modern age is decisive—that the world is transformed into picture and man into *subiectum*—throws light at the same time on the grounding event of modern history, an event that at first glance seems almost absurd. Namely, the more extensively and the more effectually the world stands at man's disposal as conquered, and the more objectively the object appears, all the more subjectively, i.e., the more importunately, does the *subiectum* rise up, and all the more impetuously, too, do observation of and teaching about the world change into a doctrine of man, into anthropology. It is no wonder that humanism first arises where the world becomes picture. It would have been just as impossible for a humanism to have gained currency in the great age of the Greeks as it would have been impossible to have had anything like a world picture in that age. Humanism, therefore, in the more strict historiographical sense, is nothing but a moral-aesthetic anthropology. The name "anthropology" as used here does not mean just some investigation of man by a natural science. Nor does it mean the doctrine established within Christian theology of man created, fallen, and redeemed. It designates that philosophical interpretation of man which explains and evaluates whatever is, in its entirety, from the standpoint of man and in relation to man (Appendix 10).

The increasingly exclusive rooting of the interpretation of the world in anthropology, which has set in since the end of the eighteenth century, finds its expression in the fact that the fundamental stance of man in relation to what is, in its entirety, is defined as a world view (*Weltanschauung*). Since that time this word has been admitted into common usage. As soon as

the world becomes picture, the position of man is conceived as a world view. To be sure, the phrase "world view" is open to misunderstanding, as though it were merely a matter here of a passive contemplation of the world. For this reason, already in the nineteenth century it was emphasized with justification that "world view" also meant and even meant primarily "view of life." The fact that, despite this, the phrase "world view" asserts itself as the name for the position of man in the midst of all that is, is proof of how decisively the world became picture as soon as man brought his life as *subiectum* into precedence over other centers of relationship. This means: whatever is, is considered to be in being only to the degree and to the extent that it is taken into and referred back to this life, i.e., is lived out, and becomes life-experience. Just as unsuited to the Greek spirit as every humanism had to be, just so impossible was a medieval world view, and just as absurd is a Catholic world view. Just as necessarily and legitimately as everything must change into life-experience for modern man the more unlimitedly he takes charge of the shaping of his essence, just so certainly could the Greeks at the Olympian festivals never have had life-experiences.

The fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture. The word "picture" [*Bild*] now means the structured image [*Gebild*] that is the creature of man's producing which represents and sets before.¹⁸ In such producing, man contends for the position in which he can be that particular being who gives the measure and draws up the guidelines for everything that is. Because this position secures, organizes, and articulates itself as a world view, the modern relationship to that which is, is one that becomes, in its decisive unfolding, a confrontation of world views; and indeed not of random world views, but only of those that have already taken up the fundamental position of man that is most extreme, and have done

18. *Gebild* is Heidegger's own word. The noun *Gebilde* means thing formed, creation, structure, image. *Gebild* is here taken to be close to it in meaning, and it is assumed—with the use of "structured"—that Heidegger intends the force of the prefix *ge-*, which connotes a gathering, to be found in the word (cf. QT 19 ff.). "Man's producing which represents and sets before" translates *des vorstellenden Herstellens*.

so with the utmost resoluteness. For the sake of this struggle of world views and in keeping with its meaning, man brings into play his unlimited power for the calculating, planning, and molding of all things. Science as research is an absolutely necessary form of this establishing of self in the world; it is one of the pathways upon which the modern age rages toward fulfillment of its essence, with a velocity unknown to the participants. With this struggle of world views the modern age first enters into the part of its history that is the most decisive and probably the most capable of enduring (Appendix 11).

A sign of this event is that everywhere and in the most varied forms and disguises the gigantic is making its appearance. In so doing, it evidences itself simultaneously in the tendency toward the increasingly small. We have only to think of numbers in atomic physics. The gigantic presses forward in a form that actually seems to make it disappear—in the annihilation of great distances by the airplane, in the setting before us of foreign and remote worlds in their everydayness, which is produced at random through radio by a flick of the hand. Yet we think too superficially if we suppose that the gigantic is only the endlessly extended emptiness of the purely quantitative. We think too little if we find that the gigantic, in the form of continual never-having-been-here-yet, originates only in a blind mania for exaggerating and excelling. We do not think at all if we believe we have explained this phenomenon of the gigantic with the catchword "Americanism" (Appendix 12).

The gigantic is rather that through which the quantitative becomes a special quality and thus a remarkable kind of greatness. Each historical age is not only great in a distinctive way in contrast to others; it also has, in each instance, its own concept of greatness. But as soon as the gigantic in planning and calculating and adjusting and making secure shifts over out of the quantitative and becomes a special quality, then what is gigantic, and what can seemingly always be calculated completely, becomes, precisely through this, incalculable. This becoming incalculable remains the invisible shadow that is cast around all things everywhere when man has been transformed into *subiectum* and the world into picture (Appendix 13).

By means of this shadow the modern world extends itself out into a space withdrawn from representation, and so lends to the incalculable the determinateness peculiar to it, as well as a historical uniqueness. This shadow, however, points to something else, which it is denied to us of today to know (Appendix 14). But man will never be able to experience and ponder this that is denied so long as he dawdles about in the mere negating of the age. The flight into tradition, out of a combination of humility and presumption, can bring about nothing in itself other than self-deception and blindness in relation to the historical moment.

Man will know, i.e., carefully safeguard into its truth,¹⁹ that which is incalculable, only in creative questioning and shaping out of the power of genuine reflection. Reflection transports the man of the future into that "between" in which he belongs to Being and yet remains a stranger amid that which is (Appendix 15). Hölderlin knew of this. His poem, which bears the superscription "To the Germans," closes:

*How narrowly bounded is our lifetime,
We see and count the number of our years.
But have the years of nations
Been seen by mortal eye?*

*If your soul throbs in longing
Over its own time, mourning, then
You linger on the cold shore
Among your own and never know them.*²⁰

19. Wissen, *d.h., in seine Wahrheit verwahren, wird der Mensch*. . . . Here the verb wissen (to know), strongly emphasized by its placement in the sentence, is surely intended to remind of science (*Wissenschaft*) with whose characterization this essay began. On such knowing—an attentive beholding that watches over and makes manifest—as essential to the characterizing of science as such, see SR 180 ff.

20. Wohl ist enge begrenzt unsere Lebenszeit,
Unserer Jahre Zahl sehen und zählen wir,
Doch die Jahre der Völker,
Sah ein sterbliches Auge sie?
Wenn die Seele dir auch über die eigene Zeit
Sich die sehende schwingt, trauernd verweist du
Dann am kalten Gestade
Bei den Deinen und kennst sie nie.

APPENDIXES

1. Such reflection is not necessary for all, nor is it to be accomplished or even found bearable by everyone. On the other hand, absence of reflection belongs to a very great extent to certain definite stages of achieving and moving forward. And yet the questioning belonging to reflection never becomes either groundless or beyond all question, because, in anticipation, it questions concerning Being. Being is for it that which is most worthy of questioning. Reflection finds in Being its most extreme resistance, which constrains it to deal seriously with whatever is as the latter is brought into the light of its Being. Reflection on the essence of the modern age puts thinking and decision into the sphere of effective working that belongs to the genuinely essential forces of this age. These forces work as they will, beyond the reach of all everyday valuation. In the face of these forces, there is only a readiness for their decisive issue or, instead, an evasive turning away into the ahistorical. In this connection, however, it is not sufficient to affirm technology, for example, or, out of an attitude incomparably more essential, to set up "total mobilization," as an absolute once it is recognized as being at hand.²¹ It is a matter of constantly grasping in advance the essence of the age from out of the truth of Being holding sway

21. Heidegger refers here to the central theme of Ernst Jünger's "Die Totale Mobilmachung," first published in 1931 as the preliminary sketch for his monumental book *Der Arbeiter* [The worker] (Hamburg: Hanserische Verlagsanstalt, 1932). Originally, on the basis of his experience of World War I, Jünger sees "total mobilization" as the fundamental characteristic of modern warfare. Primarily a confrontation between man and technology, war shows itself to be a "gigantic labor process" (*gigantischer Arbeitsprozess*). (See "Die Totale Mobilmachung" in *Blätter und Steine* [Hamburg: Hanserische Verlagsanstalt, 1934], p. 130.) In the evolution of Jünger's thinking, the meaning of the term "total mobilization" extends itself to denote the phenomenon which for him is the essence of modern times: man's dominating of the earth by means of his technological will. "The war front and the labor front are identical" (*Der Arbeiter*, p. 109). Viewing Jünger's thinking in the light of Nietzsche's, Heidegger understands "total mobilization" as the final realization of the metaphysics of the will to power, or as the final phase of "active nihilism." See *The Question of Being* [Zur Seinsfrage], trans. William Klubach and Jean T. Wilde (New York: Iwayne, 1958), pp. 41 ff.

within it; for only thus, simultaneously, is that which is most worthy of questioning experienced, i.e., that which radically carries forward and constrains a creating into the future, out beyond what is at hand, and lets the transformation of man become a necessity springing forth from Being itself. No age lets itself be done away with by a negating decree. Negation only throws the negator off the path. The modern age requires, however, in order to be withstood in the future, in its essence and on the very strength of its essence, an originality and range of reflection for which we of today are perhaps preparing somewhat, but over which we certainly can never gain mastery.

2. The phrase "ongoing activity" [*Betrieb*] is not intended here in a pejorative sense. But because research is, in essence, ongoing activity, the industrious activity of mere "busyness" [*des blossen Betriebs*], which is always possible, gives the impression of a higher reality behind which the burrowing activity proper to research work is accomplished. Ongoing activity becomes mere busyness whenever, in the pursuing of its methodology, it no longer keeps itself open on the basis of an ever-new accomplishing of its projection-plan, but only leaves that plan behind itself as a given; never again confirms and verifies its own self-accumulating results and the calculation of them, but simply chases after such results and calculations. Mere busyness must at all times be combated precisely because research is, in its essence, ongoing activity. If we seek what is scientific in science solely in serene erudition, then of course it seems as though the disowning of practical activity also means the denying of the fact that research has the essential character of ongoing activity. It is true that the more completely research becomes ongoing activity, and in that way mounts to its proper level of performance, the more constantly does the danger of mere industriousness grow within it. Finally a situation arises in which the distinction between ongoing activity and busyness not only has become unrecognizable, but has become unreal as well. Precisely this balancing out of the essential and the aberrant into the average that is the self-evident makes research as the embodiment of science, and thus makes the modern age itself, capable of enduring. But whence does re-

search receive the counterpoise to the mere busyness within its ongoing activity?

3. The growing importance of the publishing business is not based merely on the fact that publishers (perhaps through the process of marketing their books) come to have the best ear for the needs of the public or that they are better businessmen than are authors. Rather their peculiar work takes the form of a procedure that plans and that establishes itself with a view to the way in which, through the prearranged and limited publication of books and periodicals, they are to bring the world into the picture for the public and confirm it publicly. The preponderance of collections, of sets of books, of series and pocket editions, is already a consequence of this work on the part of publishers, which in turn coincides with the aims of researchers, since the latter not only are acknowledged and given consideration more easily and more rapidly through collections and sets, but, reaching a wider public, they immediately achieve their intended effect.

4. The fundamental metaphysical position of Descartes is taken over historically from the Platonic-Aristotelian metaphysics and moves, despite its new beginning, within the same question: What is it to be? That this question, formulated in this way, does not come to the fore in Descartes's *Meditations* only proves how essentially the change in the answer to it already determines the fundamental position. Descartes's interpretation of what it is to be and of truth first creates the presupposition underlying the possibility of a theory of knowledge or a metaphysics of knowledge. Through Descartes, realism is first put in the position of having to prove the reality of the outer world, of having to save that which is as such.

The essential modifications of the fundamental position of Descartes that have been attained in German thinking since Leibniz do not in any way overcome that fundamental position itself. They simply expand its metaphysical scope and create the presuppositions of the nineteenth century, still the most obscure

* Was ist das Seiende? Literally, "What is being?"

of all the centuries of the modern age up to now. Indirectly those modifications confirm the fundamental position of Descartes in a form in which they themselves are almost unrecognizable, though they are not for that reason the less real. In contrast, mere Cartesian Scholasticism, with its rationalism, has lost all power further to shape modern times. With Descartes begins the completion and consummation of Western metaphysics. And yet, because such a consummation is only possible once again as metaphysics, modern thinking has its own greatness.

With the interpretation of man as *subiectum*, Descartes creates the metaphysical presupposition for future anthropology of every kind and tendency. In the rise of the anthropologies, Descartes celebrates his greatest triumph. Through anthropology the transition of metaphysics into the event of the simple stopping and setting aside of all philosophy is introduced. The fact that Dilthey disavowed metaphysics, that fundamentally he no longer even understood its question and stood helpless before metaphysical logic, is the inner consequence of his fundamental anthropological position. His "philosophy of philosophy" is an outstanding form of the anthropological abrogation—not the overcoming—of philosophy. This is why every anthropology in which previous philosophy is employed at will but is explained as superfluous *qua* philosophy has the advantage of seeing clearly what is required along with the affirmation of anthropology. Through this, the intellectual situation finds some clarification, while the laborious fabrications of such absurd offshoots as the national-socialist philosophies produce nothing but confusion. The world view does indeed need and use philosophical erudition, but it requires no philosophy, since, as world view, it has already taken over a particular interpretation and structuring of whatever is. But one thing, surely, anthropology cannot do. It cannot overcome Descartes, nor even rise up against him, for how shall the consequence ever attack the ground on which it stands?

Descartes can be overcome only through the overcoming of that which he himself founded, only through the overcoming of modern, and that means at the same time Western, metaphysics. Overcoming means here, however, the primal asking of the question concerning the meaning, i.e., concerning the realm of

the projection or delineation, and thus concerning the truth, of Being—which question simultaneously unveils itself as the question concerning the Being of truth.

5. The concept of world as it is developed in *Being and Time* is to be understood only from within the horizon of the question concerning "openness for Being" [*Da-sein*], a question that, for its part, remains closely conjoined with the fundamental question concerning the meaning of Being (not with the meaning of that which is).

6. What belongs properly to the essence of the picture is standing-together, system. By this is not meant the artificial and external simplifying and putting together of what is given, but the unity of structure in that which is represented [*im Vor-gestellten*] as such, a unity that develops out of the projection of the objectivity of whatever is. In the Middle Ages a system is impossible, for there a ranked order of correspondences is alone essential, and indeed as an ordering of whatever is in the sense of what has been created by God and is watched over as his creature. The system is still more foreign to the Greeks, even if in modern times we speak, though quite wrongly, of the Platonic and Aristotelian "systems." Ongoing activity in research is a specific bodying-forth and ordering of the systematic, in which, at the same time, the latter reciprocally determines the ordering. Where the world becomes picture, the system, and not only in thinking, comes to dominance. However, where the system is in the ascendancy, the possibility always exists also of its degenerating into the superficiality of a system that has merely been fabricated and pieced together. This takes place when the original power of the projecting is lacking. The uniqueness of the systematic in Leibniz, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling—a uniqueness that is inherently diverse—is still not grasped. The greatness of the systematic in these thinkers lies in the fact that it unfolds not as in Descartes out of the subject as ego and *substantia finita*, but either as in Leibniz out of the monad, or as in Kant out of the transcendental essence of finite understanding rooted in the imagination, or as in Fichte out of the infinite I, or as in Hegel out of Spirit as absolute knowledge,

or as in Schelling out of freedom as the necessity of every particular being which, as such a being, remains determined through the distinction between ground and existence.

The representation of value is just as essential to the modern interpretation of that which is, as is the system. Where anything that is has become the object of representing, it first incurs in a certain manner a loss of Being. This loss is adequately perceived, if but vaguely and unclearly, and is compensated for with corresponding swiftness through the fact that we impart value to the object and to that which is, interpreted as object, and that we take the measure of whatever is, solely in keeping with the criterion of value, and make of values themselves the goal of all activity. Since the latter is understood as culture, values become cultural values, and these, in turn, become the very expression of the highest purposes of creativity, in the service of man's making himself secure as *subjectum*. From here it is only a step to making values into objects in themselves. Value is the objectification of needs as goals, wrought by a representing self-establishing within the world as picture. Value appears to be the expression of the fact that we, in our position of relationship to it, act to advance just that which is itself most valuable; and yet that very value is the impotent and threadbare disguise of the objectivity of whatever is, an objectivity that has become flat and devoid of background. No one dies for mere values. We should note, for the sake of shedding light on the nineteenth century, the peculiar in-between position of Hermann Lotze, who at the same time that he was reinterpreting Plato's Ideas as values undertook, under the title *Microcosmos*, that *Attempt at an Anthropology* (1856) which still drew sustenance for the nobility and straightforwardness of its mode of thinking from the spirit of German idealism, yet also opened that thinking to positivism. Because Nietzsche's thinking remains imprisoned in value representation, he has to articulate what is essential for him in the form of a reversal, as the revaluation of all values. Only when we succeed in grasping Nietzsche's thinking independently of value representation do we come to a standing-ground from which the work of the last thinker of metaphysics becomes a task

assigned to questioning, and Nietzsche's antagonism to Wagner becomes comprehensible as the necessity of our history.

7. Correspondence [*Die Entsprechung*], thought as the fundamental characteristic of the Being of whatever is, furnishes the pattern for very specific possibilities and modes of setting the truth of this Being, in whatever has being, into the work. The art work of the Middle Ages and the absence of a world picture in that age belong together.

8. But did not a sophist at about the time of Socrates dare to say, "Man is the measure of all things, of those that are [*hier seiend*], that they are, of those that are not, that they are not?" Does this statement of Protagoras not sound as though Descartes were speaking? Most importantly, is it not true that the Being of whatever is, is grasped by Plato as that which is beheld, as *idea*? Is the relation to what is as such not for Aristotle *theōria*, pure beholding? And yet it is no more the case that this sophistic statement of Protagoras is subjectivism than it is that Descartes could carry into execution nothing but the overturning of Greek thought. Certainly, through Plato's thinking and through Aristotle's questioning a decisive change takes place in the interpretation of what is and of men, but it is a change that always remains on the foundation of the Greek fundamental experience of what is. Precisely as a struggle against sophism and therefore in dependency upon it, this changed interpretation is so decisive that it proves to be the end of Greek thought, an end that at the same time indirectly prepares the possibility of the modern age.²² This is why Platonic and Aristotelian thinking has been able to pass for Greek thinking per se, not only in the Middle Ages but throughout the modern age up to now, and why all pre-Platonic thinking could be considered merely a preparation for Plato. It is because from long habituation we see Greek thinking through a modern humanistic interpretation that it remains denied to us

22. The word "end" (*Ende*) should here be taken in its full sense of conclusion, issue, aim, purpose.

to ponder the Being that opened itself to Greek antiquity in such a way as to leave to it its uniqueness and its strangeness. Protagoras' statement runs: *Panton chrēmātōn metron estin anthrōpos, tōn men ontōn hōs estin, tōn de mē ontōn hōs ouk estin* (cf. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 152).²³

"Of all things (those, namely, that man has about him in customary use, and therefore constantly, *chrēmata chrēsthai*) the (particular) man is the measure, of those that presence, that they presence as they presence, but also of those to which it remains denied to presence, that they do not presence." That which is whose Being stands ready for decision is here understood as that which presences of itself within this sphere, within the horizon of man. But who is man? Plato gives details concerning this in the same place, when he has Socrates say: *Oukoun hōiōs pōs legei, hōs hoia men hekasta emoi phainetai, toiauta men estin emoi, hoia de soi toiauta de au soi anthrōpōs de su, te kai egō*.²⁴ "Does he (Protagoras) not understand this somewhat as follows? Whatever at a given time anything shows itself to me as, of such aspect is it (also) for me; but whatever it shows itself to you as, such is it in turn for you. You are a man as much as I."²⁵

Man is here, accordingly, a particular man (I and you and he and she). And this *egō* is not supposed to coincide with the *ego cogito* of Descartes? Never. For everything essential, i.e., that which determines with equal necessity the two fundamental metaphysical positions in Protagoras and Descartes, is different in the

23. Cornford translates: "Man is the measure of all things—like of the being of things that are and of the not-being of things that are not." Having given his own translation of the quotation at the beginning of this paragraph, Heidegger now proceeds to give, at the beginning of the next, a rendering of it that presents his thinking out of the thought of the Greek passage in his own way.

24. Cornford translates: "He puts it in this sort of way, doesn't he?—that any given thing 'is to me such as it appears to me, and is to you such as it appears to you,' you and I being men."

25. This is a literal translation of the German, as the latter is of the Greek. However, it is impossible in English to bring out one emphasis that Heidegger himself gives. Following the Greek word order, he places *ais* (as; Greek *hōs*) at the beginning of the main clause in the sentence, in, an atypical German construction. He is thus able to stress by a means not available in English the importance here of the appearance to the particular observer.

two. What is essential in a fundamental metaphysical position embraces:

1. The manner and mode in which man is man, i.e., is himself; the manner of the coming to presence [*Wesensart*] of selfhood, which is not at all synonymous with I-ness, but rather is determined out of the relation to Being as such
2. The interpretation of the coming to presence [*Wesensauslegung*] of the Being of whatever is
3. The delineation of the coming to presence [*Wesensentwurf*] of truth
4. The sense in which, in any given instance, man is measure

None of these essential moments in a fundamental metaphysical position may be understood apart from the others. Each one always betokens, from the outset, the whole of a fundamental metaphysical position. Precisely why and in what respect these four moments sustain and structure in advance a fundamental metaphysical position as such is a question that can no longer be asked or answered from out of metaphysics and by means of metaphysics. It is a question that is already being uttered from out of the overcoming of metaphysics.

To be sure, for Protagoras, that which is does remain related to man as *egō*. What kind of relation to the I is this? The *egō* taries within the horizon of the unconcealment that is meted out to it always as this particular unconcealment. Accordingly, it apprehends everything that presences within this horizon as something that is. The apprehending of what presences is grounded in this tarrying within the horizon of unconcealment. Through its tarrying [*das Verweilen*] in company with what presences, the belongingness of the I into the midst of what presences is. This belonging to what presences in the open fixes the boundaries between that which presences and that which absents itself. From out of these boundaries man receives and keeps safe the measure of that which presences and that which absents. Through man's being limited to that which, at any particular time, is unconcealed, there is given to him the measure that always confines a self to this or that. Man does not, from out of some detached I-ness, set forth the measure to which

everything that is, in its Being, must accommodate itself. Man who possesses the Greeks' fundamental relationship to that which is and to its unconcealment is *metron* (measure [Mass]) in that he accepts restriction [*Mässigung*] to the horizon of unconcealment that is limited after the manner of the 1; and he consequently acknowledges the concealedness of what is and the insusceptibility of the latter's presencing or absenting to any decision, and to a like degree acknowledges the insusceptibility to decision of the visible aspect of that which endures as present.²⁶ Hence Protagoras says (Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*: Protagoras B, 4): *Peri men theon ouk echo eidenai, outh' hos eisin, outh' hos ouk eisin, outh' hopoioti times idean.*²⁷ "I am surely not in a position to know anything (for the Greek, to have anything in 'sight') regarding the gods, neither that they are nor that they are not, nor how they are in their visible aspect (*idea*)."

*Polla gar ta kolhonta eidenai, he t' adelotes kai brachus on hō bios tou anthrōpou.*²⁸ "For manifold is that which prevents the apprehending of whatever is as what it is, i.e., both the non-disclosedness (concealment) of what is and the brevity of man's historical course."

Need we wonder that Socrates, considering Protagoras' circumspection, says of him, *Eikos mentoi sophon andra mē lerein*: "We may suppose that he (Protagoras), a sensible man, (in his statement about man as *metron*) is not simply babbling on."²⁹

The fundamental metaphysical position of Protagoras is only a narrowing down, but that means nonetheless a preserving, of the fundamental position of Heraclitus and Parmenides. Sophism is possible only on the foundation of *sophia*, i.e., on the foundation of the Greek interpretation of Being as presencing and of truth as unconcealment—an unconcealment that itself remains an essential determination of Being, so that what presences is de-

26. *die Unentscheidbarkeit . . . über das Aussehen des Wesenden.*

27. "As to the gods, I have no means of knowing either that they exist or that they do not exist" (Nahm).

28. "For many are the obstacles that impede knowledge, both the obscurity of the question and the shortness of human life" (Nahm).

29. Cornford translates: "Well, what a wise man says is not likely to be nonsense."

termined from out of unconcealment and presencing is determined from out of unconcealedness in its particularity.³⁰ But just how far removed is Descartes from the beginning of Greek thinking, just how different is the interpretation of man that represents him as subject? Precisely because in the concept of the *subjectum* the coming to presence of Being as experienced by the Greeks—the *hypokeisthai* of the *hypokeimenon*—still resounds in the form of a presencing that has become unrecognized and unquestioned (namely, the presencing of that which lies fixelly before), therefore the essence of the change in fundamental metaphysical position is to be seen from out of that coming to presence of Being.

It is one thing to preserve the horizon of unconcealment that is limited at any given time through the apprehending of what presences (man as *metron*). It is another to proceed into the unlimited sphere of possible objectification, through the reckoning up of the representable that is accessible to every man and binding for all.

All subjectivism is impossible in Greek sophism, for here man can never be *subjectum*; he cannot become *subjectum* because here Being is presencing and truth is unconcealment.

In unconcealment *fantasia* comes to pass: the coming-into-appearance, as a particular something, of that which presences—for man, who himself presences toward what appears. Man as representing subject, however, "fantasizes," i.e., he moves in *imaginatio*, in that his representing imagines, pictures forth, whatever is, as the objective, into the world as picture.

9. How does it happen at all that that which displays itself in a pronounced manner as *subjectum*,³¹ and that as a conse-

30. In this sentence Heidegger shows the wholly mutual relation that he envisions between Being (*Sein*) and what is (*Seiendes*), i.e., between presencing and what presences, that each is forever determining and determined by the other. Cf. "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics," in *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 61 ff., 128 ff.

31. Here "displays itself" translates *sich auslegt*. *Auslegen* is usually translated in these essays with "to interpret." For Heidegger the interpreting accomplished in metaphysics is the correlate of the displaying of itself in its Being vouchsafed by that which is.

quence the subjective achieves dominance? For up to Descartes, and also still within his metaphysics, that which is, insofar as it is a particular being, a particular *sub-iectum* (*hypo-keimenon*), is something lying before from out of itself, which, as such, simultaneously lies at the foundation of its own fixed qualities and changing circumstances. The superiority of a *sub-iectum* (as a ground lying at the foundation) that is preeminent because it is in an essential respect unconditional arises out of the claim of man to a *fundamentum absolutum inconcussum veritatis* (self-supported, unshakable foundation of truth, in the sense of certainty). Why and how does this claim acquire its decisive authority? The claim originates in that emancipation of man in which he frees himself from obligation to Christian revelational truth and Church doctrine to a legislating for himself that takes its stand upon itself. Through this liberation, the essence of freedom, i.e., being bound by something obligatory, is posited anew. But because, in keeping with this freedom, self-liberating man himself posits what is obligatory, the latter can henceforth be variously defined. The obligatory can be human reason and its law; or whatever is, arranged and objectively ordered from out of such reason; or that chaos, not yet ordered and still to be mastered through objectification, which demands mastery in a particular age.

But this liberation, although without knowing it, is always still freeing itself from being bound by the revelational truth in which the salvation of man's soul is made certain and is guaranteed for him. Hence liberation from the revelational certainty of salvation had to be intrinsically a freeing to a certainty [*Gewissheit*] in which man makes secure for himself the true as the known of his own knowing [*Wissen*]. That was possible only through self-liberating man's guaranteeing for himself the certainty of the knowable. Such a thing could happen, however, only insofar as man decided, by himself and for himself, what, for him, should be "knowable" and what knowing and the making secure of the known, i.e., certainty, should mean. Descartes's metaphysical task became the following: to create the metaphysical foundation for the freeing of man to freedom as the self-determination that is certain of itself. That foundation, however, had not only to be itself one that was certain, but since every standard of

measure from any other sphere was forbidden, it had at the same time to be of such a kind that through it the essence of the freedom claimed would be posited as self-certainty. And yet everything that is certain from out of itself must at the same time concomitantly make secure as certain that being for which such certain knowing must be certain and through which everything knowable must be made secure. The *fundamentum*, the ground of that freedom, that which lies at its foundation, the *subiectum*, must be something certain that satisfies the essential demands just mentioned. A *subiectum* distinguished in all these respects becomes necessary. What is this something certain that fashions and gives the foundation? The *ego cogito* (*ergo*) *sum*. The something certain is a principle that declares that, simultaneously (conjunctly and lasting an equal length of time) with man's thinking, man himself is indubitably co-present, which means now is given to himself. Thinking is representing, setting-before, is a representing relation to what is represented (*idea* as *perceptio*).³²

To represent means here: of oneself to set something before oneself and to make secure what has been set in place, as something set in place. This making secure must be a calculating, for calculability alone guarantees being certain in advance, and firmly and constantly, of that which is to be represented. Representing is no longer the apprehending of that which presences, within whose unconcealment apprehending itself belongs, belongs indeed as a unique kind of presencing toward that which presences that is unconcealed. Representing is no longer a self-unconcealing for . . . ,³³ but is a laying hold and grasping of What presences does not hold sway, but rather assault rules. Representing is now, in keeping with the new freedom, a going forth—from out of itself—into the sphere, first to be made secure, of

32. *Perceptio* is from the Latin *percipere* (*per* + *capere*), thoroughly to lay hold of. The *idea*, that which presents itself and is viewed directly, has become the *perceptio*, that which is laid hold of and set in place and is thus known.

33. *das Sich-entbergen für . . .* *Sich-entbergen* (self-unconcealing) might be very literally translated "self-harboring forth." The verb speaks of that accepting of bounds from out of which Greek man opened himself toward that which presenced to him. See Appendix 8, pp. 143 ff. For a discussion of *entbergen* and other words formed on *bergen*, see QT 11 n. 10.

what is made secure. That which is, is no longer that which presences; it is rather that which, in representing, is first set over against, that which stands fixedly over against, which has the character of object [*das Gegen-ständige*]. Representing is making-stand-over-against, an objectifying that goes forward and matters.³⁴ In this way representing drives everything together into the unity of that which is thus given the character of object. Representing is *cogitatio*.

Every relation to something—willing, taking a point of view, being sensible of [something]—is already representing; it is *cogitans*, which we translate as "thinking." Therefore Descartes can cover all the modes of *voluntas* and of *affectus*, all *actiones* and *passiones*, with a designation that is at first surprising: *cogitatio*. In the *ego cogito sum*, the *cogitare* is understood in this essential and new sense. The *subiectum*, the fundamental certainty, is the being-represented-together-with—made secure at any time—of representing man together with the entity represented, whether something human or non-human, i.e., together with the objective. The fundamental certainty is the *me cogitare = me esse* that is at any time indubitably representable and represented. This is the fundamental equation of all reckoning belonging to the representing that is itself making itself secure. In this fundamental certainty man is sure that, as the representer of all representing,³⁵ and therewith as the realm of all representedness, and hence of all certainty and truth, he is made safe and secure, i.e., *is*. Only because in the fundamental certainty (in the *fundamentum absolutum inconcussum* of the *me cogitare = me esse*), man is, in this way, necessarily represented-together-with; only because man who frees himself to himself belongs necessarily within the *subiectum* of this freedom—only for this reason can and must this man himself be transformed into an exceptional being, into a subject which, with regard to that which truly (i.e., certainly) is, which is primary,³⁶ has preeminence among all *subiecta*. That in the fundamental equation of certainty, and then again in the actual *subiectum*, the *ego* is named does not mean that man is now being defined in terms of the I

and egotistically. It means simply this: To be subject now becomes the distinction of man as the thinking-representing being [*Wesen*]. The I of man is placed in the service of this *subiectum*. The certainty lying at the foundation of this *subiectum* is indeed subjective, i.e., is holding sway in the essence of the *subiectum*; but it is not egotistic. Certainty is binding for every I as such, i.e., for every I as *subiectum*. In the same way, everything that intends to be established, through representing objectification, as secured and hence as in being, is binding for every man. But nothing can elude this objectification that remains at the same time the decision concerning what must be allowed to count as an object. To the essence of the subjectivity of the *subiectum* and to the essence of man as subject belongs the unconditional delimiting forth [*Entschränkung*] of the realm of possible objectification and the right to decide regarding objectification.³⁷

Now it has also been clarified in what sense man as subject intends to be and must be the measure and center of that which is, which means of objects, of whatever stands-over-against. Man is now no longer *metron* in the sense of the restricting of his apprehending to the encircling sphere, particularized at any given time, of the unconcealment belonging to whatever presences toward which each man presences at any given time. As *subiectum*, man is the co-*agitatio* of the *ego*. Man founds and confirms himself as the authoritative measure for all standards of measure with which whatever can be accounted as certain—i.e., as true, i.e., as in being—is measured off and measured out (reckoned up). Freedom is new as the freedom of the *subiectum*. In the *Meditationes de prima philosophia* the freeing of man to the new freedom is brought onto its foundation, the *subiectum*. The freeing of modern man does not first begin with the *ego cogito ergo*

37. The noun *Entschränkung* is peculiar to Heidegger. Related nouns mean bounds or that which is enclosed. On the prefix *ent-*, as meaning forth or out, see QT II n. 10. *Entschränkung* expresses Heidegger's view that to set bounds is to free what is enclosed to be what it is (cf. QT 8). Heidegger is using the word in this context to point up the contrast between the position of modern man and that of Greek man, who, far from setting limits, "accepts restriction to the horizon of unconcealment that is limited [*beschränkt*]" after the manner of the I, "and who, far from deciding about what shall have being," acknowledges the concealedness of what is and the insusceptibility of the latter's presenting or absencing to any decision." See p. 146.

34. *Das Vorstellen ist vor-gehende, meisternde Ver-gegen-ständlichung.*

35. Literally, "as the one who sets-before all setting-before."

36. *das erste wahrhaft (d.h. gewiss) Seiende.*

sum, nor is the metaphysics of Descartes merely a metaphysics subsequently supplied and therefore externally built onto this freedom, in the sense of an ideology. In the *co-agitatio*, representing gathers all that is objective into the "all together" of representedness. The *ego* of the *cogitare* now finds in the self-securing "together" of representedness, in *conscientia*, its essence. *Conscientia* is the representing setting together of whatever has the character of object, along with representing man, within the sphere of representedness safeguarded by man. Everything that presences receives from out of this representedness the meaning and manner of its presence [*Anwesenheit*]³⁶—namely, the meaning and manner of presence [*Präsenz*]³⁷—in *repraesentatio*. The *conscientia* of the *ego* as the *subiectum* of the *cogitatio* determines, as the subjectivity of the *subiectum* that is distinctive in this way, the Being of whatever is.

The *Meditationes de prima philosophia* provide the pattern for an ontology of the *subiectum* with respect to subjectivity defined as *conscientia*. Man has become *subiectum*. Therefore he can determine and realize the essence of subjectivity, always in keeping with the way in which he himself conceives and wills himself. Man as a rational being of the age of the Enlightenment is no less subject than is man who grasps himself as a nation, wills himself as a people, fosters himself as a race, and, finally, empowers himself as lord of the earth. Still, in all these fundamental positions of subjectivity, a different kind of I-ness and egoism is also possible; for man constantly remains determined as I and thou, we and you. Subjective egoism, for which mostly without its knowing it the I is determined beforehand as subject, can be canceled out through the insertion of the I into the we. Through this, subjectivity only gains in power. In the planetary imperialism of technologically organized man, the subjectivism of man attains its acme, from which point it will descend to the level of organized uniformity and there firmly establish itself. This uniformity becomes the surest instrument of total, i.e., technological, rule over the earth.³⁸ The modern freedom of sub-

36. The reader will recognize in this passage a close foreshadowing of Heidegger's later characterization of the modern age as that wherein—under the rule of Enframing as the essence of technology—everything that is, is, through man, being transformed into and set in order as nothing but standing-reserve. Cf. QT 14 ff.

jectivity vanishes totally in the objectivity commensurate with it. Man cannot, of himself, abandon this destining of his modern essence or abolish it by fiat. But man can, as he thinks ahead, ponder this: Being subject as humanity has not always been the sole possibility belonging to the essence of historical man, which is always beginning in a primal way, nor will it always be. A fleeting cloud shadow over a concealed land, such is the darkening which that truth as the certainty of subjectivity—once prepared by Christendom's certainty of salvation—lays over a disclosing event [*Ereignis*] that it remains denied to subjectivity itself to experience.

10. Anthropology is that interpretation of man that already knows fundamentally what man is and hence can never ask who he may be. For with this question it would have to confess itself shaken and overcome. But how can this be expected of anthropology when the latter has expressly to achieve nothing less than the securing consequent upon the self-secureness of the *subiectum*?

11. For now the melting down of the self-consuming essence of the modern age into the self-evident is being accomplished. Only when this is assured through world views will the possibility arise of there being a fertile soil for Being to be in question in an original way—a questionableness of Being that will open ample space for the decision as to whether Being will once again become capable of a god, as to whether the essence of the truth of Being will lay claim more primally to the essence of man. Only there where the consummation of the modern age attains the heedlessness that is its peculiar greatness is future history being prepared.

12. "Americanism" is something European. It is an as-yet-uncomprehended species of the gigantic, the gigantic that is itself still inchoate and does not as yet originate at all out of the complete and gathered metaphysical essence of the modern age. The American interpretation [*Interpretation*] of Americanism by means of pragmatism still remains outside the metaphysical realm.

13. Everyday opinion sees in the shadow only the lack of light, if not light's complete denial. In truth, however, the shadow is a manifest, though impenetrable, testimony to the concealed emitting of light. In keeping with this concept of shadow, we experience the incalculable as that which, withdrawn from representation, is nevertheless manifest in whatever is, pointing to Being, which remains concealed.

14. But suppose that denial itself had to become the highest and most austere revealing of Being? What then? Understood from out of metaphysics (i.e., out of the question of Being, in the form What is it to be?), the concealed essence of Being, denial, unveils itself first of all as absolutely not-having-being, as Nothing. But Nothing as that Nothing which pertains to the having-of-being is the keenest opponent of mere negating. Nothing is never nothing; it is just as little a something, in the sense of an object [*Gegenstand*]; it is Being itself, whose truth will be given over to man when he has overcome himself as subject, and that means when he no longer represents that which is as object [*Objekt*].

15. This open between is the openness-for-Being [*Da-sein*], the word understood in the sense of the ecstatic realm of the revealing and concealing of Being.

Science and Reflection¹

In keeping with a view now prevalent, let us designate the realm in which the spiritual and creative activity of man is carried out with the name "culture." As part of culture, we count science, together with its cultivation and organization. Thus science is ranked among the values which man prizes and toward which, out of a variety of motives, he directs his attention.

But so long as we take science only in this cultural sense, we

1. "Reflection" is the translation of the noun *Besinnung*, which means recollection, reflection, consideration, deliberation. The corresponding reflexive verb, *sich besinnen*, means to recollect, to remember, to call to mind, to think on, to hit upon. Although "reflection" serves the needs of translation best in this and other essays in this volume, the word has serious inadequacies. Most importantly, reflection—from Latin *reflectere*, to bend back—intrinsically carries connotations uncomfortably close to those in Heidegger's use of *vorstellen*, to represent or set before, and could suggest the mind's observing of itself. Moreover, reflection, and could suggest available as translations of *Besinnung*, lacks any marked connotation of directionality, of following after. The reader should therefore endeavor to hear in "reflection" fresh meaning. For Heidegger *Besinnung* is a recollecting thinking-on that, as though scenting it out, follows after what is thought. It involves itself with sense (*Sinn*) and meaning, and is at the same time a "calm, self-possessed surrender to that which is worthy of questioning." See below, pp. 180 ff.; cf. *What Is Called Thinking?*, trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 207 ff.